

Let me tell you a story friend. It comes to me on the wings of my memory. I did not intend to tell it tonight but I believe God would have me tell it.

When I started on the Ravenhill Road, almost thirty years ago, to preach the gospel, God gave us gracious breathings of His Spirit and people came to Christ. There was a dear young woman who came to the Saviour. She had been brought up in the Church of Ireland, steeped in the Catechism, confirmed but not saved. One day, thank God, she got saved. She had a great desire to see her family won for Christ.

I was down in the town of Bangor for a few days of holiday in the summertime. I was going along by the Pickie Pool, and this young woman met me. She said, "I have been looking for you. My uncle is seriously ill. They have diagnosed he has cancer of the throat. Mr. Paisley, I know you are on holiday, but I would like you to go and try and lead him to Christ, for he is not saved."

So I got aboard a bus and got up to the Royal Victoria Hospital and found out the ward where he was. I was not as well known then as I am now. When I went down the ward and came to him, he put out his hand and started to weep and said, "I have been praying you would come."

There was a little nurse there. She was a cheeky little nurse. She said to me, "This man is ill, you must not disturb him." I said, "If I were a priest you would have screens round the bed. You get screens round this bed. If you want to hear what I am going to say to him, you're welcome. It would do you good as well as him." She

brought the screens alright, but she did not wait to hear what I was going to say.

I sat down by his bed. John said to me, "Oh, I am so glad you have come. I have been praying that you would come. I want to tell you something. Do you know Willowfield Parish Church?" I said, "I do." It is the Church of Ireland church that adjoins the area where I spent my whole ministry. He said, "I was carried to that church when I was a babe. I was baptised." He continued "When I got older, I was taught the Church catechism. 'What is your name? Who gave you this name? My Godfathers and my godmothers in my baptism, wherein I became a member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' Mr. Paisley, I believed every word of it. When I got a little older, I was prepared for confirmation. We had a great service in the church. With my friends I went forward to the Communion rail. The bishop laid his hands upon my head and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' I believed every word of it."

He went on, "I attended my church, I was elected onto the Select Vestry. I have been one of the most faithful members of that church from the day I was carried to it in my mother's arms until the day I came into this hospital. I have always stood for what is right and honest as far as I know."

"When I took ill, I said to the doctor, 'I want the truth, I do not want you to bluff me or fool me. And the doctor told me I had cancer of the throat and that they could do nothing for me.'

"I am going to die and I have been searching my heart. Mr. Paisley, the baptism of my youth is no good to me

now. No good! It has failed me. The confirmation of my youth is no good to me now. It has failed me. The words of the catechism, I do not believe a word of it. Baptism could not make me a member of Christ, a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. It is a lie!

"Here I am with cancer of the throat, and my days are numbered and I knew you could help me, and I sent for you." I wanted to completely disillusion that man about man, so I said, "You have sent for the wrong person. I can do no more for you than your rector, or the bishop." He started to weep and sob and said, "But I was depending that you would do the job and see me right." "I am as powerless as your own preacher and your own bishop. You have got to face up to that, friend." He said, "Then what will I do?" I replied, "I know One Who can meet your case."

I did not tell him the great theological doctrines which I was taught when I was preparing myself to be a minister. I just told him the simple story which my mother taught me when I was a little boy. All about a Blessed Jesus, a Wonderful Saviour Who said "good-bye" to Heaven and the Glory Land, and came down to this old world of shame and sin and carried the burden of my guilt to an old rugged cross, and shed His Blood to originate a Fountain which could cleanse from sin. I remember John saying, through his tears, "Tell me more."

I told him more of the wonder of the cross. He said, "That is good." I said, "It is." He said, "What will I do?" I said, "You just throw yourself, for eternity, upon what Jesus has done." He cried, "I will do it." He put out his hand, and I held it, and John, that day, by grace

alone, became a child of God. He became a member of Christ. He became an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. How? By the act of some parson? No, sir! By the touch of water? No, sir! By some connection with a church? No, sir! By simple faith alone in Jesus!

John did not die that day, nor for many days. He lived for over a year. His testimony from that bed, as the cancer gnawed its way into his throat, was the testimony of a man walking with God.

I was with him on the day he passed the river. He was removed to the City Hospital. His wife was beside him. John was nearing the end of the journey. He could not speak now. He could only whisper. All we could do to help him was dip the tip of our finger in iced water and put it across his parched burning lips.

I repeated to him the old Shepherd's Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd." In a whisper he repeated it after me, line after line, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

Then we came to that verse, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." He said, "Mr. Paisley, lift me up." His wife and I put our arms around John and gently lifted him up in the bed, and smoothed his pillows. He said, "Lift me a little higher." We lifted him up until he was almost sitting up in bed.

He then said, "Go on." I read, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear..." Then he stopped, and with all the energy of a body which was spent, but with a soul burning with everlasting life and joy, he shouted, "No, No, No evil." The nurses came running to see what was wrong. John said, "It is all right. I am walking in the valley." We finished

the Psalm together, "I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever." Not very long after that, John went to dwell in the House of the Lord forever!

I am going to meet him some day. I am sure he will be near the gate the day Ian Paisley passes through to be with Jesus. Praise God, he is in the Father's House for evermore by Free Grace alone.

I hope you have got the message. It is not baptism. It is not the church, or any religion, or any denomination or anything which you can do. It is only Christ can save you. Jesus only.

"I am not saved. I am a church member. I am an office bearer in the church. But I am not saved." Is that what you have to say? John had to say that but praise God, he got saved!

I want to say something more. *"I have felt the Spirit of God stirring my heart in this campaign, but I am not saved."* Have you to confess that?

You know what men have said to their friends during these mission days? "I cannot sleep at night. I have been thinking about where I will spend eternity." But those very men are not saved yet. Are you one of them? You have felt a hand greater than eternity, laid upon your soul, and you know you ought to be saved, but you are not saved yet.

There was a man in the meeting here last night, and he sat until the seat literally shook. A friend of his pleaded with him, "Won't you come?" He said, "I cannot, I cannot."

"Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life."

"I have felt the power of God in my soul, but I am not saved." Is that you?

SECOND: THE TIME OF CONFESSION

Do you know when they said it? They said it when the harvest was past, and the summer was ended. Do you know what that means? It was said when the day of final opportunity was gone forever. Oh, may your confession not come too late!

I left school in this town and before I went to the Barry School of Evangelism, I went to the County Tyrone, to the place where the Paisleys hail from, Six-milecross, to a dear man of God. For six months I was with that man helping him on his farm. Then God called me one day as I was harrowing in corn with two horses. He called me to sow a better seed, and to reap a more glorious harvest. Thank God, as a boy of fifteen I was not disobedient to the heavenly calling.

Now there was a neighbour man who lived below us in a little long whitewashed cottage on the left-hand side as you go up the hill. I had finished my day's work, and I was walking between the heads of the two horses which I worked with, making my way homewards. When I came level to his home he came to the door, and he said, "Ian, I hear you are going away." I replied, "I am. I am going to be a preacher." I remember him standing at the gate and cursing. I said, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended and you are not saved."

He laughed and amidst his vile language said, "There are plenty of summers still to come and plenty of harvests still before us."

I went on up the road, after witnessing to that man. I returned about three or four months afterwards.

As I passed that little farmhouse, the shutters were up, the door was nailed up, and the house was forsaken. I went on up the road. When I arrived at my friend George Watson's house, I said, "George, the little farm down the road is forsaken. What has happened?" He said, "Oh, Ian, just a few days after you left, that man took sick. They rushed him to the Omagh Hospital, and in a few hours he was in eternity."

I can see that man now standing at his gate and jeeringly saying, "There are many summers still to come. There are many harvests still to be reaped." But for that man, poor deceived fool, the harvest was past, the summer was ended, and his soul was lost. Damned in Hell tonight, that poor deceived, vile-speaking drunkard. I am glad there is not a drop of his blood on my coat. I am glad I was faithful. I was only a boy, but I had zeal enough to warn him about the great eternity.

I have warned you all tonight in plain simple language. You do not need a dictionary to understand what I have been getting at. You know what I am talking about.

I have only one final word to say. Get saved tonight! Do not wait another minute. Get saved now!

AMEN AND AMEN!

SERMON:

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

"He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." (Mark 3:29)

During the past five weeks, as the Spirit of God has helped us, we have been preaching on great gospel themes. I have been speaking of *the pardon of God*. What a great thing it is to experience the pardon of God in our hearts. Oh, the sweetness of God's pardon, sins blotted out, sins everlastingly forgiven and, glory to God, everlastingly forgotten.

I am not going to preach on pardon this afternoon. I am going to discourse upon the sin which God does not and will not pardon. How dark that sin must be. How heinous and hellish in character it must be, when the pardoning God of Heaven refuses, either in time or eternity, ever to pardon that sin.

I have been preaching night after night about *the mercy of God*. How merciful and tender and gracious is our God! If He had been strict to mark iniquity, we could not have stood. He is longsuffering. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Hear me this afternoon! I am going to talk about a sin which God never, never, never has mercy upon. I am going to talk about a sin, and when a man commits it he puts himself beyond the longsuffering stretch of God's arm of mercy. How dark and desperate and damnable

that sin must be, that thrusts a man outside the circle of God's mercy!

Night after night I have been preaching about *the power of the Blood of Christ*, about the wonderful merit and sin-atoning value of the Blood of Christ. This afternoon I am going to talk about a sin that the Blood of Jesus does not cleanse. Not that the Blood has lost any of its power; not that the Everlasting Efficacy of the Blood of Christ is one whit diminished but this is the sin which cannot ever be brought, to the Fountain filled with Blood, for cleansing. This is a sin which can never be repented of, or brought to be blotted out to the Crimson Bloodstream of Emmanuel's veins. What a sin that must be, that is never brought, at any time, by any person who commits it, to the Blood for cleansing.

I have been speaking of *the promises of God*. How blessed are those promises! How assuring are those promises! How firm and substantial and everlasting are those promises!

This afternoon I have to discourse to you about a sin, and there is not one promise in the Book which can raise even a small star of hope to the man who commits this terrible and atrocious crime.

I have been speaking to you about *peace*. Thank God for the peace which Jesus gives.

There have been troubled souls here. Men and women have been disturbed by the power of God here. There have been people with weeping eyes, broken hearts and broken homes here. Thank God, they have found Heaven's peace. The Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son whispered peace to their hearts. Their tears were wiped away. "He shed a beautiful rainbow over the valley of tears." Their

hearts were healed, and praise God, their broken homes were healed as well because God breathed everlasting peace into their hearts.

I am going to talk this afternoon about a sin, and the soul who commits it can never know God's peace, can never have the burden of this sin lifted, can never have the darkness of this sin dispelled, can never in any way free his soul in time, or free his soul in death, or free his soul in eternity from the unrest, the war, the conflict and the torment of this sin. There is no peace for the man or woman, boy or girl who commits this sin.

I have been speaking about *God's salvation*. Jesus saves! Yes, He does. In this hall we have seen the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our hearts have been strangely stirred. Men and women have come down these aisles and have said, "Christ for me, Christ for me."

I was speaking to a young convert at this mission last night in my own church. Her face was radiant with the joy of God. She was telling me of the thrill in her soul of God's salvation. What a wonderful thing it is to be saved.

I want to talk today however, about a sin which God never saves anybody from. Listen, the Blessed Saviour never stretches out His hand to a man or woman who commits this sin, and lifts them out of that sin into His Blessed Self. I am going to talk about a sin which locks the Holy Ghost forever out of your heart. The Sin which the Spirit of God never convicts of and never convinces of. So we have a very solemn subject this afternoon.

I trust that you Christians will pray that no sinner in the Town Hall will commit this sin this afternoon, that no man or woman here will go across the line and have

their sad soul left in the blast by wilful resistance having drifted away over the deadlines at last.

I want to deal with this subject in a very simple way, so that there might be no misunderstanding and that the message might be clear and plain.

Of course there are many arguments about this sin. There are many different interpretations on it. I just want to bring it to you as the Word of God sets it forth in plain, unmistakable language. You will be under no misapprehension. There will be no shadows in your thinking. You will not misunderstand in any way, or be deceived in any way, but you will know before this sermon is over what this sin is, how you can commit it and the awful, everlasting punishment which will surely fall without remedy on your soul if you commit it.

I want to ask the question, "*What is it not?*" I want to deal with it negatively first of all.

Then I want to deal with it positively, I want to answer the question, "*What it is.*"

Then last of all I want to speak briefly on *how, and when and where this awful sin is committed.*

ONE, WHAT IT IS NOT

First of all, what it is not. I want to say very clearly, *it is not some type of awful swearing or some sort of vile, filthy blasphemy.* I want to make that clear. It is something different from that.

Mr. Nicholson says in his sermon on this subject, that when he was an apprentice before the mast on a sailing ship, there was a second mate on that ship, a hard swearing man and he used to swear in the Name of the

Holy Spirit of God, Mr. Nicholson said the crew used to shudder and say, "That is the unpardonable sin." But the old preacher said he learned when he was saved that that was not the unpardonable sin, because the Name of Christ is just as precious to God as the Name of the Holy Ghost. The Name of the Father is just as precious as the Name of the Spirit.

So it is not some form of swearing, or cursing, or blasphemy or filthy vile language.

Let me put it on the record today so that nobody may have any misunderstanding whatsoever. God can save the vilest blasphemer. I want to make that clear. I do not care how filthy your tongue is. I do not care what dark, hellish blasphemies have escaped from your lips. I do not care how vile your language and your speech has been. The God that I preach and the Saviour I believe in can save the vilest blasphemer outside of Hell. Let me make that clear!

A man who lived in our neighbourhood was one of the vilest blasphemers whom I personally have ever met. When he went into a place of business on the Beersbridge Road everybody left the shop, because his language was of the coarsest and lewdest type, and of the vilest nature. Even hardest sinners used to say to me, "Oh, that man when he speaks, even I a sinner tremble at his language." One night to my surprise I saw that man in a gospel meeting at which I was preaching. I said, "Oh, God, help me to preach to that man's soul." I forgot about everybody else and I preached my sermon for and to that man. Thank God, that night he was caught in the gospel net. That is twenty years ago, and God cleaned his heart and God washed his tongue as well.

I was in a place of business some time later, and its owner, a Church of Ireland man, who never came to hear me preach said to me, "You did a good job Paisley, on that fellow." I said, "I did no job on him. It was the Lord did it. It was not me. Neither your bishops, nor your archbishops, nor Paisley nor anybody else could do anything to clean up a man like that. Thank God, it is Jesus who cleaned him up."

So if you are a blasphemer and the old devil is getting at you and saying, "Look at all your filthy language. Look at all your cursing and swearing and violation of the third commandment." I have good news for you. Jesus can save you this afternoon. Thank God, He can set you free. Do not let Satan tell you you have committed the unpardonable sin and that there is no hope for you!

Could I say, *it is not any form of drunkenness*. I have met some drunkards in my day, and some alcoholics in my ministry. I have seen men who have boozed so much until they wrecked their homes, until they wrecked their businesses, until they have wrecked their bodies and until they have wrecked their prospects.

I have seen the grace of God save them. The grace of God transforms them. The grace of God lifts them from the verge of a drunkard's Hell and brings them to Christ. Thank God, they are rejoicing today. They have got a taste of the new wine. They never went back to the Devil's buttermilk again. Thank God, the Lord saved them.

He can do it for you today. If there is some drunkard here and the Devil is saying to you, "I have got you. You have committed the unpardonable sin. I have tied

the ropes of alcoholism around you. I have tied the bars of drink about you. You are going down to a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's Hell and you will never escape." He is a liar friend! Jesus can save the drunkard. Jesus can save the alcoholic. Jesus can save those who are tied in the bondage of booze and of liquor.

It is not the scarlet sin. It is not any form of adultery, or fornication or illicit relationships of any kind. The Bible says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." I do not care what immorality you have committed. I do not care what kennel of adultery you have entered into. Let me tell you this afternoon that there is not a man and not a woman stained with the scarlet sin that my Blessed Saviour cannot save.

I have seen men who were tied with lust and bound with impurity. I have seen women who were on the streets tied in the bondage of harlotry, and, thank God, in my ministry I have seen them saved, transformed and cleansed by the Blood of Christ.

Is there someone here and you have a dark immoral shadow in your life? Satan is saying to you, "There is no hope for you. You cannot be saved. It is not for you." Let me tell you woman, let me tell you man, the unpardonable sin is not some type of immorality.

It is not theft. The dying thief is in Heaven. Men who thieved have been saved by the grace of God. I have seen men who could not take their fingers off other people's property. I have seen people who were addicted to thieving like a disease. I have seen in their lives the emancipating power of the Gospel of Christ.

If there is a dark cloud in your life, if you have been coveting, if you have been claiming things which are not your own, and the Devil is saying to you this afternoon, "You are a thief. You cannot stay away from the thieving, the stealing." Let me tell you friend, it is not the unpardonable sin. Glory to God there is hope for you at the cross. "The dying thief rejoiced to see that Fountain in his day, and there may you, as vile as he, wash all your sin away."

Let me go a bit farther, *it is not murder.* A man could take another man's life, but, there is still forgiveness with God.

Saul of Tarsus was a murderer. He dragged God's children to Jerusalem, and when they were put to death he gave his word against them. He held the garments of the men who stoned Stephen, and he consented to his death. But, praise God, the chief of sinners was saved! When God saved the chief of sinners, there is hope for you. The chief of sinners is already in Heaven, so there is hope for you!

Is there some man here, and in the tragedy of his dark past, through his word, through his deed and by his encouragement, life was taken? Is there someone here and you are a party to the dark crime of murder, and there is blood on your hands, and there is blood on your soul? The Devil is saying to you, "You murderer, you have committed the unpardonable sin. There is no hope for you." I want to tell you, there is blessed hope in Jesus Christ for you. You can read the catalogue of sin in I Corinthians, "such were some of you, but ye have been washed." Praise God, Christ's Blood can make ten thousands clean, His Blood avails for me!

TWO, WHAT IT IS

Having said that and having underlined what it is not, I will tell you *what the unpardonable sin is*.

Let me lay down an axiom of scriptural truth, and it is this, "Truth resisted loses its power." When you hear gospel truth and it affects your mind, and your conscience and your soul, if you resist that truth then that truth begins to lose, because of the hardness of your heart, and the hardness of your conscience and the rejection of your mind, its deep cutting edge. I tell you friend, if you go on resisting truth the influence of truth in your life will weaken, the power and hold of truth in your life will be lessened.

The old Pharisees, do you remember them? They stood one day and Jesus Christ was confronted with a blind man. Jesus put forward His fingers and touched those unseeing eyes and suddenly they saw. Jesus then turned to the Pharisees and said, "What about that?" Those Pharisees closed their eyes to the miracle-working Christ and closed their eyes to the testimony of His power to give sight to the blind.

Then those very same Pharisees saw the Blessed Saviour confronted with the leper. The fingers were off the man's hands, his nose and eyes were eaten away, and his whole carcass was one rotten piece of cankerous meat and bone. Jesus said, "Be clean." Suddenly the leper was made perfectly whole. Jesus turned to the Pharisees and said, "What about that?" They closed their eyes to the Christ Who made the lepers whole.

Then one day the Blessed Saviour stood in the graveyard and they rolled away the stone. The supreme

test — to call a man from the dungeons of death after he had been three days in the grave, and more. Jesus called, "Lazarus, come forth," and from the tomb Lazarus stepped forth with not even a smell of death upon him. He turned round and said to the Pharisees, "What about that?" They closed their eyes again to the demonstration of the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Then one day they brought a man to the Lord Jesus Christ and he was filled with demons from the satanic underworld. Tied! Chained! Bound! Imprisoned! Incarcerated! Jesus cast out the devils, broke the chains and set the man free. The man stood forth, clothed and in his right mind. Jesus said, "What about that?" The Pharisees said, "You are in league with Hell. You are in league with the Devil. Because you are in league with the prince of devils you can do this miracle."

They were across the line forever. They had committed the unpardonable sin, because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Are you getting the message? It is the final rejection of Christ. It is the final rejection of Jesus Christ which constitutes the unpardonable sin.

At times your conscience has been moved, your heart has been disturbed and your soul has felt the unrest of the conviction wrought by the Spirit of God. Let me say something solemnly to you, if you have one serious thought this afternoon, even a tiny bit of concern in your heart, thank God for it. I know men who would thank God for any concern of soul. They have no concern of soul now because they have crossed the line.

THREE, HOW, WHEN AND WHERE IT IS

COMMITTED

I remember an incident in my early ministry I will never forget. A young woman frequented the gospel services and sat under the power of the gospel. I remember when her companion, Mary, who brought her to the church, got saved. Oh, how concerned Mary was that her companion would accept Christ. I remember one night, I can think of now. I was preaching in my old church and the place was packed, and God was moving. I saw God breathe upon that girl. She sat troubled and concerned. The tears flowed freely down her face. When the appeal was made, instead of receiving Christ she headed for the door in a Christ-rejecting frame of mind.

The next Sabbath she was back at the service but what a change. Frivolity had taken the place of solemnity, unconcern had taken the place of conviction. As I preached I noticed her attitude was changed. Her whole attitude to Christ was different. I said, "I will speak to her at the end of the service." When the service was over I stood at the door, and I said to her, as she was passing, "I would like to see you." She stepped into the little prayer room in our old church. I said to her, "Last Sunday you were concerned." She said, "You can say that again." I said, "Last Sunday you were moved." She said, "Mr. Paisley, you can say that again." I said, "Last Sunday the Spirit of God was at work in your heart." She said, "You can say that again." I said, "Tell me, what has happened? You are not concerned now?"

She laughed and said, "Indeed I am not Mr. Paisley. In fact you will never see me at this church again. I have decided that I will never again come to gospel meetings." I said, "Why?" She said, "Mr. Paisley, when I went down the Ravenhill Road to Swift Street, where I live, last Sunday night I heard a voice speaking in my heart. That voice was calling me to come to the Cross and to Christ. It was a terrible voice. It was a terrifying voice, a voice that drove out all other voices and it echoed in my soul.

"I went to my home and my mother said, 'Will you take supper?' I said, 'No.' I went up the stairs and I got hastily to bed. I put the blankets over my ears to drown out that voice. Beneath the blankets and the sheets I heard the voice of God calling to my soul, calling to me to come to Christ and close with the offer of the gospel.

"I tossed and turned for many an hour. Then I got so angry that I jumped from my bed and fell on my knees and uttered an awful prayer. I said, 'Holy Ghost, leave me alone. Holy Ghost, leave me alone, Holy Ghost, leave me alone.' The voice stopped. I got into bed and slept better than I have slept for weeks. I am enjoying my sins again in the world. I will never be back at your services."

She shook me by the hand and passed over the church door. That was many years ago and I have never seen or heard of her since. As I looked into her eyes I asked, "Am I looking into the eyes of a soul who has committed the unpardonable sin?"

I want to tell you something. You do not need to get down on your knees and tell the Holy Spirit to leave you. You do not need to challenge in that way the striving

of the Blessed Spirit of God. But let me tell you this afternoon, if you reject Christ and refuse Him and walk down the stairs of this hall on to the street, a Christ rejector, then you could this very afternoon have heard the final call of God to your soul, and have stifled that call for evermore you would then go out carrying in your bosom a soul as good as damned in Hell. That is what the unpardonable sin is!

"There is a place,
I know not where,
A time I know not when
That seals the destiny of man,
For glory or despair.

There is a line by us unseen
That crosses every path,
The hidden boundary between
God's mercy and God's wrath.

To cross that line it is to die,
To die as if by stealth,
It does not dull the beaming eye
Or quench the glow of health,

The conscience may be still at ease,
The spirit light and gay,
That which is pleasing, still may please,
And fears be thrust away.

But on the forehead God has set
Indelibly the mark,

Unseen by man, for man as yet
Is blind and in the dark.

Indeed the doomed man's path below
May bloom as Eden bloomed,
He does not, will not, know or feel
He's not just doomed but damned."

Did I say, there is a time I know not when? Did I say, a place I know not where? Friend, that time is here. That place is this hall for your soul this very afternoon.

A young woman attended services like these, and she came under deep conviction of sin. The final meeting came just like this final meeting. It was a lady evangelist, and that evangelist poured out her heart and pleaded with her congregation to come to Christ. Many came.

She noticed however that a young woman took a pencil from her handbag, turned over to the front of the hymn-book, wrote something on the fly-leaf and then closed it. That act struck the evangelist at the time, and then she forgot about it.

A few weeks later the evangelist was back in the city where the services had taken place. She met one of the workers and she said, "Do you remember Miss So and So? She did not come to Christ." The worker said, "That is right." The evangelist said, "What is wrong?" She said, "She is taken ill, seriously ill, she is dying." The evangelist quickly made her way to that young woman's home. She was shown into her bedroom. When that dying girl saw her, she said, in great anger, "Who sent for you? I did not. I have made my decision. It is

written in the hymn-book." The evangelist prayed but she was praying for a soul who had a barricade against the gospel which could not be penetrated.

She went away to the church and got the sexton and together they brought out all the hymn-books. She started to look for a hymn-book with writing on the front page. Eventually they found the hymn-book. Across the fly-leaf were these words, "I will run the risk. I will take my chance" with the young girl's name and the date underneath. "I will run the risk. I will take my chance." That young woman made the fatal decision. She made a final decision. Tonight her tormented soul is out in the darkness of a lost sinner's Hell.

Are you going to run the risk and take the chance, young woman? Are you going to run the risk and take the chance, young man? You do not need to write it in the hymn-book, for it will be written in the chronicles, the unchanging chronicles of the Most High God. It will be written that a young man sat in the Ballymena Town Hall at the final Sabbath afternoon service of the five week old-time gospel campaign. His heart had been stirred, his soul had been troubled, his conscience had been moved, but he ran the risk, he took his chance and he went out and went to Hell. Is that what the harvest is going to be? Is that what the reaping is going to be? Young woman, is that what is going to happen to you?

Men and women, this afternoon the Spirit of God has moved in this hall. He has moved in this hall as He has not moved in this town for many a long year. God has

been passing this way. Jesus Christ is here this afternoon. It may be the last time you will ever hear His call.

"O, come, sinner come,
O, why do you delay?
The striking invitation is
That you should come today,
Tomorrow has no promise
That it can give to you,
Tomorrow is eternity
Just hidden from your view.

O, come, sinner come,
Accept the proffered grace,
For death may soon be calling you
Into her cold embrace,
The harvest will be ended,
The summer will be past,
Your lamentation then will be
My soul is lost at last."

In Jesus' Name I adjure you by the Most High God to come to Christ and get the great matter settled for all eternity. May God grant it!

AMEN AND AMEN!

SERMON:

A BROKEN FAMILY
CIRCLE

A BROKEN FAMILY CIRCLE

"And I heard the number of them which were sealed . . ." Rev. 7:4.

I have a very solemn subject to talk about.

Although it is solemn, and although parts of it are darkened and shadowed with sorrow, yet, thank God, there is still the sun of hope and the star of eternal light.

May that sun of hope rise upon the souls of sinners. May that star of hope be seen by wandering men, and like the star of Bethlehem may it lead them to the Blessed and only Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

I want to talk upon a broken family circle.

THE WONDER OF A FAMILY

There is something wonderful about a family. It is the unit of society and it is the unit which ties men and women in the closest of fellowship together.

I always feel very happy when the night comes and all the family is safely in. I am sure every father and every mother knows that feeling.

I do not keep early hours. I keep very late hours. I am sure if the neighbours did not know I was a preacher, they would wonder what sort of character I am.

When I get home at night however, I always like to do the rounds to see that everybody is in, and that the little ones are tucked in.

I have a lovely little lassie at home, Cherith. She is daddy's sweetheart. She likes me to come up to her bedroom at night. She says, "Even if I am sleeping daddy, come up and kiss me. I like to know that my daddy gives me a kiss when I am sleeping." It is nice to have all the children in.

I am sure we would like to always have them with us. We would like to be always able to tuck them into their little cots and know they are under the eye of father's care, and of mother's love.

But that is not possible. The nest has to be broken. The family has to leave the home. We are all called upon to build our own homes, to establish our own family units. Yes, and then, some day, with the passing of the years, those homes too break up. The children go away and build homes of their own. The grandchildren come, and once again the brightness of babyhood and boyhood and girlhood brightens the home of the aged. Then death comes and the last remnants of the nest are smashed, and the last fabric of the home is gone.

I am so glad that God re-makes the home over in the Glory Land. I am glad that God keeps all the pieces so carefully. I am glad that God loves the family. "He setteth the solitary in families," saith the Book. I am glad He is a family God and Christianity is a covenant and family relationship.

I happen to believe in the old covenant theology. I believe that God wants to save all the family. He wants to bring them all to Christ. It is not His intention or

purpose that His own people should bring children into the world that they might be the fuel of Hell. Praise God, it is His purpose that every child begotten of His people should be in Christ. I do not believe that religion runs in the blood, but I believe that it runs by the grace of God in families.

If you do not agree with that, come and see me after the meeting and I will talk to you. You will believe what I believe before you leave. I am sure of that!

God re-builds the family in a better world. Death comes and smashes it up. God re-builds it. What a glorious thing it is to know that not just some of the pieces, but all of the pieces and persons are going to be put together eternally in the Glory Land.

The greatest blessing which a Christian can know after his own salvation is to know that everyone of his family are in Christ. That is the greatest blessing after his own personal salvation. For some of you in this very campaign God has answered your prayers, and you have got household salvation.

Yes and some day after the rest of the home is smashed, after the family ties are all rudely broken and after the fabric of the home has gone so far that men will have forgotten it ever existed, in the Land that is fairer than day, in the Father's House of many mansions, the Land of far distances, God will re-build the family again. Hallelujah! Father in. Mother in. Boys in. Daughters all in. What a glorious day that will be. I see my Sharon, Rhonda, Cherith, Kyle and Ian all safely in Heaven. I will let out a great shout that day. If it were possible in Heaven to have an earache, you will have

earache that day I will tell you that! What a day! It is the intention and purpose of God that it should be so.

THE DEATH BED OF JACOB

I read to you a most moving scene. An old man is dying. What a man he was! They called him Jacob. Oh, he had a rough passage. His was no easy journey. He had known the storms of life. He had known the temptations of life. He had known the trials of life. He had known the sins of life. He had known the scars of life. But now he is at the end of the journey.

He started off a supplanter. He started off a twister. He started off with the marks of sin upon him. He started off deceiving his father, and then he himself was deceived by his father-in-law. Keep your eye on your father-in-law! Poor old Jacob discovered he had married the wrong woman. That is a terrible thing to discover. Yes! But he was deceived himself.

Then one day God disciplined him. God took the twist out of him. Jacob went into the battle a strong man, and he came out limping. But he came out with God's power in his soul.

It is better to have a broken body and a healed soul, than to have a broken soul and a whole body. Jacob's soul was healed by the power of God and he walked with God through the shadows.

Sometimes the sun shone. Sometimes the darkness came.

What a day of darkness it was when the sons brought the coat of his beloved son Joseph and showed him the stains of blood. That old man wept and said, "My son

has been devoured with an evil beast and my grey hairs will come down with sorrow to the grave." What a terrible day that was for Jacob.

But what a wonderful day it was when he found that Joseph was not dead. When the message came from Egypt, "Thy son liveth." He said, "I will do down to Egypt, even although it is a long journey and before I die I will see my son." He not only saw Joseph but he saw his two grandsons, and he blessed them.

When Joseph brought them for the blessing, you remember what he did? He guided his hands cunningly, by crossing his hands. For the only blessing that man can have is through the cross of Christ. That is the only way you can get blessing. He blessed them concerning things that were still to come.

Jacob is at the end of the journey now. He calls his family all in. Now these men whom he called around the bed had all the marks of the old father upon them. Some of them were as twisted as he was. Some of them were as evil as he had been.

Your sons and your daughters reflect your character to a great extent. Like produces like.

They are all around the bed, the whole twelve of them. Do you see them? He talks to each one of them. When he is finished his blessing and his prophecy, he pulls his feet into the bed. They all stand there. Then there is a shudder and a death rattle, and the old man is gone. The anchor of the family is gone. The family breaks up.

THE HISTORY OF THE FAMILY

If you turn over the pages of the Bible you will read the history of that family. We are going to have a brief look at it tonight.

When you come to Revelation chapter seven the roll-call has been called in Heaven. The family of Jacob are called in Heaven. I want you to note it well. Old Jacob stands there and he listens to God calling the names. "Reuben my firstborn are you here?" And Reuben says, "Here, by the grace of God I'm here."

Then he calls for Simeon. "Simeon, are you here?" "Yes father, by the grace of God I am here."

"Levi, my son Levi, I remember the day you were born. Levi, have you made it? Have you got to Heaven?" And Levi says, "By the grace of God I am here."

"Judah, princely Judah have you made it?" Judah stands forth in the majesty of his royal personage, and says, "Yes, father Jacob I am here, I made it by the grace of God."

"Issachar, Zebulon, Gad, Asher, Napthali, are you here? My younger sons, Benjamin, Joseph, children of the wife of my youth, are you here?" They all answer, "Yes, father Jacob, we are here." He goes over them again, and he counts them all into the Father's House.

Then he cries, "What about Dan? What about Dan?" He stands there, and the great roll-book is opened and God calls the Roll. Reuben is in, Simeon is in, Levi is in, Judah is in, Issachar is in, Zebulon is in, Asher is in, Napthali is in, Gad is in, Joseph is in, my youngest son Benjamin is in. "Where's Dan? Dan where are you? My son Dan, why have you not made it? All the other boys

are here. They were wayward just like you Dan. They committed sin just like you. They did evil things just like you and just like me. But the grace of God is great, and the Blood of Christ is precious, and the power of God is mighty, Dan where are you?" There is no reply. There is no answer. The roll-call is finished. The men of the tribes are sealed — but of all the tribes of Israel, there is not even one of the tribe of Dan sealed.

If you go back to the Book of Genesis, you will find the reason why Dan did not make it. Look down the chapter and you will read "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way." The Devil was too strong for Dan. He became a serpent by the way. The power of sin was too strong for him. Although old Jacob waited for God's salvation, Dan did not believe in His father's God. He did not believe in his mother's Saviour. When the great roll book is opened, and the family of Jacob is called, there is a name eternally missing. It is a broken family circle for evermore.

It is the saddest story in the Bible. It breaks the heart, does it not? That this great family of Israel should have one missing forever when the eternal roll is called in Heaven.

THE POWER OF THE FAMILY

We want to glance at this great family. Oh that family! What power was in that family!

Every family has power. Some families are a power for good, and some families are a power for evil. There was great power in that family of Jacob. What great

events happened to that family! What great victories were achieved by that family! What battles were won! What enemies were routed! What triumphs were accomplished by the power of that family!

There was however, one victory not accomplished. There was one conquest not achieved. There was one goal not obtained and that was the salvation of the boy Dan.

"Tell me Dan, why did you not trust your father's God? Why did you not trust your mother's Saviour?"

Tell me friend, why did Simeon and Levi and all the other boys get in, and Dan missed God's salvation? I wonder am I asking that of you tonight. Oh, yes, your father is in. Maybe he is gone before, into the Kingdom of the Father's House. Maybe as you sit here, you remember that godly old man. You could take me to the place, sir, where he used to kneel and pray for you. You remember when he put his hand upon your shoulder, and pled with you to trust Jesus and start for Heaven. You did not do it. The years have come and the years have gone, and the prayers of your father are humanly forgotten. But God has not forgotten his prayers.

Oh, man, let God answer your father's prayers, and come and get saved. Do not be like Dan when the roll is called. Do not be like Dan, unable to answer the roll.

THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF THE FAMILY

That family had many lights and shadows. There are many lights and shadows in every home. Usually the light in the home shines from the mother. I tell you, the

greatest power for good in the world is a good mother.

Napoleon was asked, "What does France most need?" They thought the great general would say, "Some crack regiment of soldiers." The great general, Napoleon Bonaparte, replied, "What France needs is good mothers."

That is what this nation needs. If ever there was a day when Ulster needed something, it is today. What does Ulster need? Our Province needs good mothers.

Oh, the power of a mother's influence. Oh, the power of a mother's prayers and a mother's words. There is nothing as powerful in the world as the influence of a mother's prayers.

God gave me two great gifts for which I am eternally thankful. He gave me a godly mother and a godly father. I owe my spiritual experience under God to them both. I thank God for a mother who early taught me to kneel in prayer. I thank God for a mother who early taught me to believe the precious Book of God. I thank God for a mother who taught me that God's way was the best way and that the best thing to do was to do the will of God. If I have done any thing with my life, if I have accomplished anything for God, and if I have attained anything or obtained anything for my Saviour, it is because God answered my mother's prayers. Oh, there is power in a mother's prayer.

You say, "Preacher, I have no such privilege. My parents are not saved. My home is not a godly one." Friend, let me tell you, you can lay the foundations of a godly family. Make the step to Christ, and praise God it could be the beginning of pulling your whole family into the Saviour's arms and into the eternal embrace of Jesus Christ. What a thing it would be if some man

from an ungodly family, some man from a home that has not grace, that has not Christ, and has not the Blood, would say "This night, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." By God's free grace the whole family can come into the kingdom of God now, if you made the step to Christ. Oh, there is power in the influence of the home.

The shadows of the home often come from the father. A father has a tremendous influence. It is a sad thing when the father's influence is for sin, for uncleanness, for evil and for crime. The saddest thing I know is a father who brings up his boys to crime.

A father went to a liquor shop one night for a booze-up. It was a snowy night. As he looked around he heard a little cry behind him. He saw his little boy and the little boy was putting his feet into the footprints, in the snow, of his father. That man stopped in his tracks and said, "My God, my footprints are leading my son to the liquor shop." That man never went back to the liquor shop. Thank God, he trusted Christ and got saved. God convicted him of his sin.

Tell me father, if your son walked in your footsteps, what sort of a son would he be? Would he be a son you would be proud of or would he be a son who would dishonour the name you gave him? Would he break his mother's heart with sorrow and with shame. Oh, you fathers face up to it. What have you been doing with your life? Living in sin, boozing your way to Hell, in the gambling den. Engaged in evil and in lust and in the scarlet sin?

You are taking your family, by the power of your example, down the broad road to Hell. Oh, father, in

God's Name, for your family's sake get right with God. Come on, get right with God.

I remember a dear mother once saying to me. "My boy came back from one of your meetings, and he said, 'Mr. Paisley was preaching about being saved mother. Mammy I would like to be saved, could you lead me to Christ?'" She said that struck an arrow into her soul. She said, "I could not lead him to Christ, preacher I have been leading him to Hell. My example has been for evil and not for good."

Tell me, what is your example? Could you truthfully say, "I would rejoice if my sons and daughters walked the path I am walking. For, praise God, by God's grace and help I am walking with God. My road is leading away from Hell, and away from sin and away from shame, up the Glory Hill and all the day long it is Jesus."

THE SINS OF THE FAMILY

This family of Jacob not only had many lights and shadows, but it was stained with sin. What family escapes the stains of sin?

When we think back over the past, we think of the ravages which sin makes.

Ah, there was an erring daughter in the home of Jacob. A beautiful young woman in that home who went astray. There was a daughter in that home who brought shame to the father's name and the mother who bore her was heartbroken.

Oh, sin plays havoc with our homes. Sin breaks down the doors. Sin enters into the hearts of our families.

They are all a prey to sin. They are all the fierce target of the attacks of sin. Poor Dinah fell and great was her fall. She not only dragged herself down, but she dragged two of her brothers down with her. She became an adulterer and they became murderers. It was a sad home when sin came and attacked it.

I would ask you, "What protection have you from sin?"

I am glad I can build a barricade of prayer around my home. I am glad that I can in the morning get the children down upon their knees and after reading God's Holy Book, I can commend them to the God Who answers prayer, a God Who protects, and guards, and guides, and praise His Holy Name, preserves His people. The greatest thing that you could do for your family, is to see them covered under the Blood of the Lamb.

You cannot give your family any protection. I know men and women, you have a father's and a mother's affection for them, and there is something wonderful about a father's and mother's love. Only a father and mother can know it. But with all your love, and with all your money, and with all your hard work, unsaved father and mother you cannot protect your family. I tell you, if you knew Christ you could surround them with your prayers and get them to Jesus which is the greatest protection they could have.

I am glad I can pray for my family. I am glad tonight I am on pleading terms with God.

John Bengel, the great old French expositor, was a holy man who walked with God. One of his old students said in later years, "I wanted to find out the secret of my professor's great holiness. So I hid one night in his bedroom and I watched to see how he ended his day.

I thought he would kneel by the bed for hours. No, he pondered the Word for hours, and then he got up and he said, with a face radiant, with the joy of God, 'Good-night, Lord Jesus on the same old terms.'"

I tell you, when you are in the same old terms with God, the Blood of Christ, the sacrifice of the Saviour, then, friend, you have the ear of God. The best thing which I can have is the blessed assurance that God hears my prayers.

Are you living where God answers prayer? No you are not! You are not saved. You cannot help your family. When sin comes, what havoc it will work. You could have preserved your family from sin if you had trusted Christ.

GET HER IN! PREACHER

In New Plymouth, USA, there was a great preacher, they called him Henry Ward Beecher. The great preacher died, and his congregation wanted someone to fill the New Plymouth pulpit. They looked all over America for a great pulpit orator and a great preacher like the man who had left them through death. They could not find one. They sent a special pulpit committee to England. One day that pulpit committee went into a church in Wolverhampton. They heard a preacher there who was yet unknown, called Dr. Berry. He was a most eloquent preacher. His voice was the voice of the golden tongued orator.

As that pulpit committee sat there they said, "This is the man to fill Henry Ward Beecher's pulpit." They gave him a call, and Berry went to New Plymouth to

commence his ministry. If Henry Ward Beecher had crowds, Berry had greater crowds. He was not a gospel preacher. He was a pulpit orator. He could describe the sunset in such glowing language, you could see that burning orb as it set in the western sky. He could describe the waves of the sea, and he could so paint them with words that you could see those great breakers rise up from their ocean bed, foam capped and terrible, and dash themselves with unrelenting fury against the reefs and rocks of the shore.

There was however, no gospel in his preaching. One night he preached a most eloquent sermon. The church was packed and the streets around it were crowded as well. He came home to his residence and sat down at the fire and suddenly he discovered the total emptiness of it all. As he sat there, his wife said, "Are you not coming to bed?" He said, "No, you go upstairs, I am going to sit here." He sat there and watched the fire die, and witnessed the coals turn to ashes.

When the room was cold and the night was coming to its depths, there came a knocking on the door, a hard sharp knocking on the door. He shuddered for a moment. Then he said, "Who could that be?" He made his way down the hallway and nervously opened the door.

Standing on the doorstep was a woman badly clothed. Her garments were torn and patched. She was an aged woman. The skin was tightly stretched over her protruding bones. She put her hand through the open doorway and Berry said later, "I will feel forever her sharpened nails and grip upon my wrists." She cried out, "You must get my daughter in. You must get my daughter in." He was flabbergasted. "Woman, I do not know

you. What is it all about?" She said, "My daughter is dying, and you are a preacher. You have got to get her in. Man, you have got to get her in."

Berry made all sorts of excuses. She gripped him tighter by the arm, and she cried more loudly, "You have got to come with me and get her in."

So reluctantly he put on his coat, and left his home, and went down into the darkened streets. That woman gripped his arm and took him past the great church where he preached. He said as he looked back at that church, it was more like a tomb in the night than a temple of God. She took him down to the lower parts of the city, he never knew existed. She took him to a laneway, and at the end of the laneway there was a rough shack. She entered into that shack, and hanging on the wall was an old oil lamp. When he entered and accustomed his eyes to the dim light he saw at the end of the shack a bundle of blankets and lying on those blankets and wrapped in one of them was the form of a young woman. The old woman dragged him over to where that young woman lay, screamed, with a scream that tore the very heart out of the preacher, "There is my daughter and you have got to get her in."

The preacher stood there. The old woman shook her fist in his face and cried, "Do you not understand? She has not long to live. Just another hour or so and then she will be dead. You have got to get her in."

The preacher knelt down. He knew the sermons which he had preached were no good now. He knew that pulpit oratory was useless in such a dark hour of crisis and tragedy. Then suddenly he remembered his godly mother who had taught him, many years before, the story of

the cross where Jesus bled and died. Very simply that preacher told again the story of the cross of Christ, the story of One Who loved men so much that He was willing to die for them. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for His friends. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

The following Sunday Berry stood up in his own church and told the story. With tears running down his face he said, "Men and women, I got her in and, praise God, I got myself in too."

Dr. Berry became one of the great gospel preachers of his generation. He not only got the poor woman in, but he got himself in too.

Friend, are you in? That is what this service is all about. Are you in Christ tonight? Dear friend, is it a broken family circle because of you? Come on, father, face up to it. Ah, you are stubborn are you not? You have refused Christ for years. You have turned your back on Him for a score of years, maybe forty years, maybe fifty years. But, bless His lovely Name, Jesus loves you tonight as much as ever.

Oh, friend, His arms are stretched out still. Will you not come? Won't you say, "Lord Jesus, tonight I will take you. I will trust you." Oh, what a happy day it would be if fathers would come, and mothers would come, and boys and girls would come, and if hardened sinners would come, from every type and class. There is room at the cross, my brother, for you with all your sin. There is power in the Crimson of Christ to make you whiter than snow.

May God get you in tonight for Jesus' Sake!

AMEN AND AMEN!

SERMON:
THE INESCAPABLE
QUESTION OF DESTINY

THE INESCAPABLE QUESTION OF DESTINY

"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"
Matt. 27:22

I want to speak to you as the Spirit of God would help me, on the question of destiny, or the most important question any man ever asked or any man ever answered.

You will find it in the twenty-second verse of the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew's gospel, "Pilate said unto them, what shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?"

I want to handle this text in a very simple manner. I want, *first of all, to say a word about the Christ of God.* I want to emphasise and stress the Person of the Saviour. The Glorious Majesty of the Master. The Glorious Sacrifice of the Saviour of men. *Secondly, I want to show you how much depends upon your answer to that question.*

Then last of all, I want to show you what every one of you will do with Jesus Christ. For make sure of this, there will be no neutrals in this service. There will be no undecided men or women in this service. There will not be a man or a woman go down the stairs today, out unto the streets of Ballymena who will not have made a vital and a terrible decision. The decision may be for Heaven. Please God, it will be! It may be for Glory.

Please God, it will be! It may be for salvation. Please God, it will be! Or it may be for damnation, darkness and Hell forever!

But make sure of this, man, make sure of this, woman, make sure of this, boy and girl, all who hear me today, you will make such a decision. You will answer this question one way or the other. This question will be answered by every man and every woman, every boy and every girl who hears my voice in this preaching meeting.

ONE: THE PERSON THE QUESTION HAS TO DO WITH

Let me talk to you, first of all then, about the Saviour. It says here, "What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?" The word "Christ" in the Greek text means "anointed." In the old Hebrew it is "Messiah." "Anointed." In the Greek it is "Christos" — "Anointed" Jesus Christ is the Anointed One of God.

Now how do I know? How can I be dead on sure? How can I be absolutely certain, How can I not have a shadow of a doubt that Jesus Christ is the Anointed of God? I will tell you.

There are five indisputable testimonies to the fact that Jesus is the Anointed of God, five great indisputable testimonies.

First of all, there is the testimony of His life.

There never was a person ever born into this world who lived the way Jesus lived. Oh, you can read the words of the agnostics. You can read the words of the

Jesus haters. You can read the words of the modernist preachers who attack the Glorious Person, the Glorious Life and the Glorious Death, the Glorious Resurrection and the Glorious Ascension of Christ. But every one of them have to admit this fact, that never in the history of the world, in the chronicles of this world's story, was there a person like Jesus Christ. His life stands out majestically above all other lives. His life has no peer. You cannot compare it with anybody else's life. It stands uniquely and distinctly alone. Why? It bears testimony to the fact that He is the Anointed of God. That is the first indisputable fact.

The second indisputable fact, the Words of Jesus.

"Never man spake like this man." Many have appeared on this scene of time. Some of them great orators who mastered their own language. They could sway the people with the language of their lips, with the oratory of their tongue, with the great eloquence of their speech.

Take the famous speeches of men, take the great oratory of its best men, take the most superb pieces of human eloquence and put them beside the Words of Jesus. Aye and when you put them beside the Words of Jesus, the Words of Jesus are like the sun. When the sun comes out, the stars all disappear. When you compare the words of man with the Words of Jesus, they are like the disappearing stars when the sun starts to shine. "Never man spake like this man." No one talked of the lily of the valley like Jesus. No one talked of Solomon, in all his glory, like Jesus. No one talked about the sower going forth to sow like Jesus. No one talked of the Fatherliness of Almighty God like Jesus. His parables are superb, because they are divine. His lan-

guage is the speech of Heaven. Even the most unbelieving hater of Christ has to admit that there is something strangely unique about the Words of Jesus.

The third indisputable fact, the Works of Jesus.

Josephus was the historian of our Lord's Age. Josephus was not able to attack the works of Christ. Do you not think if Jesus had not raised the dead, we would have documented evidence to prove He did not raise the dead? Do you not think if Jesus did not heal the leper, heal the sick and give sight to the blind, there would have been documented evidence to disprove the gospel narratives? You cannot find one piece of documented evidence to refute the works of Jesus. The fact is, He did raise the dead. The fact is, He did cleanse the leper. The fact is, He did walk on the storm-tossed sea of Galilee. The fact is, He did every miracle which is recorded of Him in the Book, and thousands more. You say "That is a tall statement preacher." That is what the Bible says. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen." — John 21:25. Why? Because His works are the third indisputable fact that He is the Anointed of God.

You are dealing this afternoon, sir, with reality. You are not dealing with a myth of history. You are not dealing with some abstract religious figure. You are dealing with a solid fact. Jesus is alive! Jesus is real! He is a real Person. The things that are written of Him have upon them the stamp of the Truth of Almighty God.

The fourth indisputable fact, His Resurrection from the dead. That is the most indisputable fact in all his-

tory. It is better proved in history than the Battle of Hastings in 1066. There is far more evidence for the resurrection than any other historical fact that we all believe in. We have more evidence for that than for the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. But let me tell you today, that the most indisputable fact in history is that Jesus rose from the dead.

Have you a Diary in your pocket? Look it up. It says 1975. Where did that year number 1975 start from? Where do you get that 1975? It is the Year of our Lord. That is after His death and resurrection. The Lord lives today. Praise God, He will live for all eternity, our loving, living Lord Jesus. He is alive!

All the other great religions take you to the tomb of their founders. The tomb of Christianity is an empty tomb, Hallelujah! Jesus is alive. The best attested fact in history is — His resurrection. That is the fourth proof.

The fifth indisputable fact is His influence to change the lives of men and women. He has been changing the lives of men and women down through the ages. He changed men in the first century.

Do you remember Saul of Tarsus? He was a persecutor. He was in the Jewish IRA in those days. He persecuted the Christians. He gave his voice against them when they died. He held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen, the first Christian martyr. But God met him on the Damascus road, changed him, transformed him, saved him.

That is what God is doing in these meetings. I look round this meeting today and I see men who four weeks ago, were on the road to Hell. Thank God today they

are on the road to Heaven. You would know something has happened to them. They are spruced up with the joy of the Lord in their faces. They are enjoying the Word now. They used to come to my meetings, and you would have thought they were in purgatory when I preached. You should have seen their twisted, distorted countenances. They were feeling the pangs of the Word but they have had a happy day experience during these meetings.

I tell you, the fifth indisputable fact about Jesus is, He is changing men today. Friend, He can change you!

A man said to me today, "I cannot get rid of my sin." I said, "That is dead right." He said, "I cannot get finished with my sin." I said, "That is right." He said, "I cannot cleanse them away." I said "That is dead right." He said, "What will I do?" I said, "Just bring them to Jesus. He will look after them. He looks after the cleansing. All you have to do is to confess your sin."

You say, "Preacher, if I cry now in my seat that I am a sinner, a guilty sinner, a hell deserving sinner, Lord save me, will He do it?" Sure he will do it. He never broke His Word yet, and He never will, and, praise God, never can. That is how men are saved, by calling on the Name of the Lord.

The fifth indisputable fact is His influence to change. So that is the Christ you are dealing with. He is not some abstract religious figure. He is not some myth of history. He is not some Jesus of a modernist's imagination who could not convert a tom-tit or blow a dandelion clock either. I tell you friend, we are preaching a real Jesus, a powerful Jesus, an Almighty Jesus, a Jesus Who saves men, and keeps men and preserves men.

I was looking down over my church today and counting men I had led to Christ in the past years. I saw a man sitting in the second seat from the back. Twenty-five years ago that man was one of the worst drunkards on the Ravenhill Road. He broke his wife's heart, wrecked his business and was wrecking his family. One day he met the Saviour. What happened? God changed him completely. He transformed him, saved him. He is now on the way to Heaven. He never misses a morning service. He is there rejoicing. He was not a Paisley convert. If he had been, he would have been back in the world. God saved him. It is a life sentence when the Lord saves you, He saves for all eternity.

TWO: WHAT DEPENDS UPON YOUR ANSWER

The first thing which depends on it is our acceptance or condemnation with God. "He that believeth is not condemned." Have you got that? "He that believeth is not condemned." "He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Name of the only begotten Son of God." So your condemnation or acceptance with God depends upon what you do with Jesus Christ. If you accept Him, praise God, God will accept you. If you embrace Him, praise God, God will embrace you. If you make Him yours this afternoon, He will make you His by His grace. Oh, praise God, there is acceptance in Jesus Christ today.

It is not your relationship to the Church. That does not come into it. It is not your relationship to baptism. That does not come into it. It is not whether you sit at the Lord's Table, or sing in the choir or serve on the

Board of the church. No! That has nothing to do with it. It is your relationship to the Christ. "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

Some one is saying here, "I am going to accept Him, preacher. I am going to call upon Him." All right, if you do that you will be accepted with God. You will be accepted in the Beloved. But if you refuse Him, you will be condemned already. "He that believeth not is condemned, (when?) already." You are already condemned sinner, for you have rejected Him.

Secondly the only way you can have peace of conscience is to trust Christ! Peace of conscience depends upon what I do with Jesus. Listen to it, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Our peace with God does not depend on good works. You can have good works and not have peace of conscience. It does not depend upon your position. You could have the most exalted position a man ever had, and not have peace of conscience.

I was telling in the early days of this campaign how I had the privilege, when I first went to Belfast, to have the personal friendship of one of the richest men in that city. A man well known in political life, well known in civic life, well known in business life. When he died he left a colossal sum of money, one of the largest sums ever left by any man who ever died in this Province. I knew him well.

I went to see him one day, for I was troubled about his soul. I had known him for quite a time, and I had never really got down to getting the blood of his soul off my coat concerning him.

I went to his grand home on the outskirts of Belfast. He said, "How are you, what brings you here?" I said, "I have come to talk about you." He said, "About me?" I said, "Yes." I said, "I am a Christian." He said, "I know that." I said, "I have been with you for a long time. You are a personal friend." He said, "Yes, and I appreciate your friendship as well." I said, "You are not saved, sir. I would not like anything to happen to you, if I had never told you you needed to be saved." I started to speak to him about the things of God. He listened intently. I said, "We will get down and pray." We got down and prayed, and I said, "Oh God, show this man how he needs to be saved. Show him how he can be saved and help him to trust the Saviour."

After I had finished praying I put my arm over his shoulder, and I said, "Man, will you not trust Christ?" He started to weep. He said, "I cannot do it. I cannot do it. I cannot do it." After sometime on his knees, he rose up an unrepented, unforgiven, and unpardoned soul. He could not do it.

You know why? Because there were things in his life he was not prepared to make right. He got some of that money in ways that were wrong. He knew if he got saved he would have to put those things right but he was not prepared to make the break. He died as he lived.

I went to see him on his death-bed. There was no peace there. There was grandeur there. There were servants there. There was money there. There was wealth there. There were big people, well placed there but there was not the peace of God there.

He died in darkness. I went to the funeral, and the minister put him in the first row of heaven. He told

people what a good man he was. He was in the church, had held office in the church. I sat in the pew and bowed my head, and I said, "Oh, God, that man is a liar, for that man rejected Christ. He is a lost soul, he died without hope." That man was high in wealth, splendour, influence, climbed as high as a man could climb, filled the highest offices in our City and Province but he never was saved. He had not peace with God.

Peace with God does not depend upon your place, or your privilege or your wealth, it depends on what you do with Jesus.

I tell you men and women, your conscience may be sleeping today, but some day it is going to arouse and awaken. You might say, "I am getting along all right preacher. I never have a qualm of conscience." Some day that sleeping giant will awaken in your soul. All your past will rise against you. All the skeletons will come out of the cupboard. All the dark things that you thought were hidden will come out into light. All the Achans that you buried in the centre of your soul will climb out of their graves to torment your conscience.

There is nothing so terrible as to carry the accuser in your breast. I tell you, peace of conscience depends upon what you do with Jesus. What are you going to do with Him this afternoon?

Thirdly, finding deep and abiding joy depends upon what you do with Jesus.

"Though we see Him not, yet believing, we have joy unspeakable (listen to it) and full of glory."

I want to tell you, the only real joyful person is the believer, the person who is really saved. We have got joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.

Let the storm clouds gather, my salvation is unalterable. I have still got joy. Let the great waves beat against the frail barque of my life, it will not alter the fact, the Lord is my salvation. You cannot alter that.

Let friends turn against me, let the men of this world deride me, let my name become a hissing and a by-word, a shame and a thing of scorn, Hallelujah! I will still joy in the God of my salvation. Nothing can alter that.

I may get sick. My body might feel weak and my resistance grow low. I might lie between the sheets and know I have come to the end of the journey, but it will not destroy my joy. My joy will still be in Christ.

Yes, and when I say good-bye to my friends, and when they pull down the blinds, and announce that Ian Paisley is dead, that will not alter my joy one iota. If I ever lived, I will live the moment after I die. I will be living then, more than I ever lived on earth. You cannot take anything from the joy that the believer has. Oh, what joy it is to know that all is well with your soul. What joy to know you are bound for heaven.

Some people come to me and say. "We do not know how you go on the way you do. You do not seem to be afraid." Why should I be afraid? The Lord is my Father. Christ is my elder Brother. We get threats, yes! I got another threat yesterday. It said six men have taken a vow they are going to kill you this week.

I will be here next Sunday, you need not worry yourself! I was thinking of Paul. There were men who vowed to kill him. They said they would not eat until they killed him. They had to starve to death, for they never got him! It is not wise to take vows like that.

I want to tell you, if you have got Christ you have got God's joy in your heart. Nothing can alter it. Nothing can take away from it. Why? It is in the Book of God. You cannot alter God's Book. It has got a good foundation. "I'm on a good foundation, Just a little bit along the Glory road." It is a great thing to be on that foundation. That is what depends on your coming to Christ, and what you do with Jesus.

There is something more, Eternal life depends on what you do with Christ.

He that *hath* the Son." What has he? Has he the Church, Communion, Baptism? No! "He that *hath* the Son *hath* life." Glory to God, if you have got Jesus, you have got everlasting life. A life that Hell cannot extinguish, and eternity cannot exhaust a life as long as the angels'. Yes it is as long as the life of God and until God's Throne totters and eternal life cannot die. God's Throne will never totter, or God will never die! You will never read the Obituary Notice of the Eternal God in the Eternal Times. He will live forever. He is the Immortal and those who have His life will live for evermore. That's what depends upon what you do with Christ.

Let me sum up. Your condemnation or acceptance depends on what you do with Jesus. Your peace of conscience depends on what you do with Jesus. Your deep abiding joy depends upon what you do with Jesus. Eternal life depends on what you do with Jesus.

THREE: WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO WITH HIM

What will you do with Jesus? I want to tell you what you are going to do with Him. Every man and every

woman here is going to do something with Him now.

First of all, some of you are going to try and get away from Him. That is what Pilate did. They brought Jesus before the Roman governor. He looked at Him. He said, "Oh, He is from Galilee. He is not under my jurisdiction in Judea. Send Him to Herod." He thought he had got rid of Him. So Pilate sat back and said, "That was a clever move. I have got rid of this Jesus. I have not to do anything about Him."

But not very long after, the loud knocking comes on the palace doors. Pilate asks, "What is that?" The crowd is back again. They are back from Herod. He questions, "What about the prisoner?" The guards reply, "Governor Pilate, the prisoner is back as well." You cannot get rid of Christ.

Some of you are saying, "Let my neighbour decide what he will do with Christ. Let my wife decide what she will do with Christ. Let my husband decide. Let my boy or girl decide. Let my neighbour decide. I am not deciding." You are trying to get away from Him, are you not? But He will be right back. You cannot get away from Jesus Christ.

Then Pilate said, "I know what I will do. I will wash my hands." So he called for a basin to be brought in. The slave boy brings in the basin of water. Pilate stands up and thrusts his hands into the basin. He lifts them up, and the waterdrops drip from His finger tips. He takes a towel and he wipes them away. He cries in passion, "I am clear from the Blood of this man." But the Man is still there. Christ still stands waiting for the verdict.

You cannot wash your hands of Jesus Christ, sir. You are going to do something with Him this afternoon.

There will be no getting away from Him. He is here for an answer, an answer you will give, an answer you *must* give and an answer you *shall* give.

Pilate then said, "I know what I will do. I will give them a substitute." He says, "Who is the worst criminal down in the cell?" They said, "Oh, Barabbas the murderer, the sedition raiser." Pilate said "Bring him out." So he brings this old twisted, diabolical criminal out of his cell, and he sets him up before the thorn-crowned Jesus. He says, "Now which one will you have? The miracle worker Christ, The man that raises your dead, heals your sick, gives sight to your blind, or will you have this murderer, Barabbas."

He thinks there is going to be a big cry, "We will have Jesus," but not at all. The crowd cries out, "Not this man, but Barabbas. Not this man, but Barabbas." Pilate cannot get away from Jesus Christ. "You thought you could do a deal, Pilate, did you not? You thought you could force the crowd to make another decision."

Then what does he do? He says, "I will not make any decision. I will let the crowd make the decision for me." He says, "What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?" They all cried out, "Let Him be crucified." But, friend, Christ is still there. Then comes the final answer, "And Pilate delivered Him to be crucified."

There is no escape from this question.

Now what will you do? There are men and women here and they will *either accept or reject Him*. That is what it means. It is going to be acceptance of Christ, or rejection. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" or are you going to reject Him and say "No" to Him?

You say, "Preacher, I do not want to make any decision. I want to think it over. I want to have some more time to consider it." Oh, my friend, there will be no time to consider it. Because if you say that, you are simply saying, "I am not having Jesus. I am not accepting Him. I am not believing on Him." You will either accept or reject Jesus Christ.

You will either confess or deny Him. The Lord Jesus says, "He that confesseth me before men, him I will confess before my Father which is in Heaven."

You say, "Preacher, I am not prepared to confess Him. I am afraid of my companions. I am afraid of the world. I am afraid of my sin." My friend, if you do not confess Him, then you will deny Him.

Make sure of this, every man who does not accept Jesus in this Town Hall, rejects Him. Every person who does not confess Jesus Christ, denies Him.

You will either be for Him or against Him. You say, "Oh, I am not against Him. Preacher, I am not really against Jesus. I would not be against the Blessed Saviour, that Man Who climbed Calvary and died on the Cross. Oh, no, no preacher, I am not against Him. I may not be a Christian, but I am not against Him." Ah, friend, you are! Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me." So the man who does not accept Him, the man who does not confess Him, is against Christ.

Last of all. You will either bring Him in, or shut Him out. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." You will either shut Him out or you will bring Him in.

Remember you are going to do those things. You are either going to accept Him or reject Him, confess Him or deny Him, be for Him or against Him, shut Him out or bring Him in. What is it going to be? You are going to answer that Inescapable Question of Destiny right now.

AMEN AND AMEN.

SERMON:

THE FIVE TOLLS IN THE
SOUL'S DEATH KNELL

THE FIVE TOLLS IN THE SOUL'S DEATH KNELL

*"He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck,
shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."*

Prov. 29:1

There are five things in this solemn text from God's Book. I have called them the Five Tolls in the Soul's Death Knell.

First of all, this text is stamped with *individuality*. It does not say, "*they* that being often reprov'd." It does not mention a class or a section of a class of humanity's millions. It points the finger at the individual. It says, "*He* that being often reprov'd."

The second thing we have in this text is the suggestion of *opportunity*.

God just does not leave men to perish. God is gracious. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. So He reproves men. He gives an opportunity to man. He reproves them, presenting the gospel to them.

He not only reproves them, He often reproves them. He gives them time aye and double time. He handles them carefully. He does not just judge them and strike them down in their sin, but He often reproves them. Praise God, for His great mercy tonight.

If He struck us down in our sin, if He were strict to mark iniquity, who would stand.

Thirdly we have black, damning *iniquity*.

The man often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck. He stubbornly resists the power of heaven. Although God in grace goes on reprov'g, goes on plead'g, goes on in the tender instrumentality of His Spirit's work, this man hardens his neck. Oh, the iniquity of hardening one's neck against Christ!

There are men and women in this meeting and they have hardened their necks for years. Some of you have done it in this campaign. Some of you were here last night and you did it last night, you hardened your neck when the invitation was given. You said, "No" to Christ. That is iniquity. That is dark, damnable, hideous, hellish iniquity, to harden your neck against the Lord.

In this text there is not only *individuality*, and *opportunity* and *iniquity*, but *fourthly* is *tragedy* in this verse.

What does it say? "Shall be destroyed," but it says something more, "*shall suddenly* be destroyed." Swift and sudden and sure will be the tragic end of the soul who hardens his neck and his heart against God. Who has hardened himself against God and prospered?

That is not the end of it. There is something else here.

Fifthly there are two words and these two words ring out the solemn note of *finality*. It is the end. The curtain is down. The lights are extinguished forever. Listen to them, "without remedy." Those words seal and sound the death knell of a damned and ruined soul in Hell. "Without remedy."

So we have five things to talk about, and they are all solemn, and they are all serious, and they all throb with the great eternity. *Individuality*, *opportunity*, *iniquity*, *tragedy* and *finality*.

INDIVIDUALITY

My friend, salvation is an individual thing. Salvation is something which has to do with you personally. That is what this text is talking about.

So often people come to meetings and the Old Devil does not want the preacher to get down to the individual. There was a woman in this meeting some nights ago and she said, "I did not like the preacher when he got personal." Hallelujah! I like to hear that. I am not preaching to a mass of people in the congregation, I am preaching to individuals. I have to get right down as if I faced you face to face. People have come to me after meetings and said, "Who told you about me? Who told you the things that you were saying about me?" I never met them before, but the Holy Ghost knew all about them. As I was preaching, the Blessed Spirit of God was applying the Word individually to their hearts.

This text is not for your neighbour, it is not for the woman sitting beside you. This text is for you tonight. God has a message which He wants me to give to you tonight. It is for some man and for some woman in this Town Hall tonight.

In that motor car coming down from the city, God, spoke to this preacher's heart and said, "This is the text. This is the message. This is the Word." I can only say I have a message from God for you. Forget about your neighbour, forget about your friends, forget about your wife, forget about your husband or your family, it is an individual matter sir, it is an individual matter madam! You need to face up to God's dealing with your own soul.

An unsaved woman was at the meeting on Sunday, and as she was going out she was most interested in the salvation of people. She was talking about people getting saved. A friend of hers said to me, "She is not talking about her own soul." That was the tragedy. She had not got the message that God wanted to save her.

Let me tell you tonight, this message is for you. There is nothing "plural" about it. It is absolutely "singular." It is applied to you. "*He or she* that is often reprov'd."

Maybe up there in the gallery, maybe at the side of the hall this message is directed personally to you. There is the authority of the God Who cannot lie, Who cannot change in this text. God is saying to you, "You have been often reprov'd. You have hardened your neck. I am going to destroy you. Judgment is going to fall suddenly upon you and it is going to be a judgment without remedy." So get the fact of the individuality of this message!

OPPORTUNITY

Secondly, in this text there is opportunity.

God reprov's men. I am glad God does not leave us on the road to hell. I am glad He does not let us go on in our mad career to hell. I am glad He does not wave goodbye to sinners and say, "All right, go on in your sin, ruin your life, smash and blight your prospects, and hell is at the end of your life." Praise God, in His great mercy He reprov's men!

He reprov's some men *by the law of God*. Some shaft from God's Book enters into their heart. "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light." It really troubles you! Some

text which you heard in the church. Some verses which a godly mother repeated to you. Some text which you saw on a billboard as you passed down the street. It fastened itself to your inmost being, and you could not get away from it, and it followed you for days and for weeks, aye, and for months. What was it? It was God reproving your soul. You wondered how you would get away from it.

Some of you plunged into deeper sin. Some of you went out after deeper worldly pleasures. Why? To escape the reproof of God.

It does not say, "He that is reproofed." It says, "He that is often reproofed." God not only reproofs men by His Word, but He reproofs men *by the sweet administration of the gospel*. And, oh, the Spirit of God comes, the Spirit of God takes the Word of God in the gospel and applies it to the hearts of men and they cannot get away from it.

There was a man saved here two nights ago, and he said, "There was not a battle in my soul tonight, but what a battle I had the night before. When I went home I could not sleep, I was miserable all day. I was glad when 8 o'clock came to get back to the gospel service." What was that, but the blessed reproof of God! May the Holy Spirit continue that Blessed work, Reproving men!

Then men are reproofed *by the circumstances of their lives*.

When God took away that loved one, that was the reproof of God. With a broken heart and weeping eyes you walked along behind the hearse. You saw the coffin of a loved one lowered into cold mother earth, and you stood by and you heard the rattle of the dull clay on the coffin lid, and something went out of your life

which can never again be replaced. What was God doing? He was reproofing you friend. He was reproofing you. The dearer that person was to you, the louder was the knock of God at your heart's door. Remember that! God reproofs men!

I wonder how many in this meeting God has reproofed *by His Word*? I wonder how many has He reproofed *by His Spirit*? I wonder how many He has reproofed *by His taking away of a loved one*?

God reproofs men *by taking away their health*. He leaves them low in a bed of illness. He puts them out of circulation for a while. They can no longer go for life's companions and pleasures.

Oh, it is a terrible thing to be under the reproof of God.

How many in this meeting remember the day when they lay on a sick bed. The doctor had not much hope for you. You were a long time ill, but God was gracious. He touched your body, got you back into circulation, and here you are with health, and strength, sound of wind and limb. You are not saved yet. You did not heed the reproofing of God. Often reproofed!

There is hardly a man in this meeting who does not fit into that category. There is hardly a woman in Northern Ireland who does not fit into that category. "He that being often reproofed." You have lost count of the number of times you have heard the reproof of God. You could not count, tonight, those innumerable mercies of the Most High God in not leaving your soul but following after you in tenderness and infinite love. Gospel opportunities have been yours galore. You have had them repeated over and over again.

God reproves when He moves into a town in a gospel campaign like this. I tell you there are not many gospel missions where you get the reproving of God the way we have had it in these days.

I have been preaching for many a long year. I started to preach when I was sixteen. I am in my fiftieth year now. I have served my apprenticeship. I am not a person just starting at the preaching. I have served my time well and true. If there is such a thing as getting a full Union Card, I am eligible for it! I have seen God move in missions, and when God moves, He is reproving men!

He has saved your companion dear friend has He not? That man whom you ran about with, he is in the meeting with you tonight, he is a changed man, for he is a saved man. You know it. That was God's reproof to you.

You unsaved husbands, you know how He has saved your wives.

You unsaved wives, you know how He has saved your husbands. They are now praying for *you*. You find it strange now, in the night time when it comes, and they get down on their knees to pray, they never did it before. They are on their knees praying for your soul.

The praying husband is God's reproof. The praying wife is God's reproof on your soul. Could you get a greater reproof than that?

Maybe that daughter of yours who came and told you father that she had got saved at the meetings, was God's reproof.

Aye, and there is a woman in the meeting and her daughter has been with her, and her daughter has said, "Mother, will you not come to Christ?" That is God's reproof to your soul!

You have been often reproved. You are in the category. This text is for you tonight. I told you at the beginning of the meeting it was for you. It is not for someone else. It is for you. "He that being often reproveth."

INIQUITY

Oh, there is something else. There is damning iniquity here, "hardeneth his neck."

I had a young man came to my church services. He came from a godly home. His mother was a Christian woman. If ever a young man was reproved of God the Holy Ghost, that young man was reproved by God the Holy Ghost. Today, a woman called at my church, that young man's sister, and she produced the death certificate of that young man. On it was the fact that he died as an alcoholic. I thought of that young man as I once knew him, in all the vigour of his health and strength. Many a time I pleaded with him to come to Christ. Many a time I preached to him the gospel. Many a time he sat under the most searching and moving of gospel sermons.

I tell you, you can harden your neck against God.

That is what you are doing friend, you are playing with hell fire. I tell you, it will burn you. It will burn your conscience, It will burn your soul. It will burn your hopes and blast your future forever. Take care what you are doing. Hardening your neck against God and His grace and His love.

You show me a man in sacred history who hardened his neck against God and prospered. Can you show me

a man in that Book who got away with hardening himself against God?

Remember old Pharaoh? He thought he could do it. He let the children of Israel go, after long reproofs with the ten plagues. Then he followed after them. In his unbelief he went down into the depths of the Red Sea after them. The mighty waves came together. I hear the shrieks of drowning thousands. I witness the wild stampede of drowning horses, and I hear the cracks of the chariot wheels as God took them off and left Pharaoh a prey to the sea and the storm. I write over that disaster, "Can you harden yourself against God and prosper?"

I could take you through the whole Book. Can you show me a man in sacred history that hardened himself against God and prospered?

Do you remember old Herod? He thought he could do it. He thought he could sneer at Jesus, put a scarlet robe on Him and send Him back to Pilate. God struck him with worms, and he was eaten with worms.

Now as those diseased worms eat out the vitals of Herod's body, I hear the Scriptures say. "Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?" Not one in sacred history. I have only time to give you two examples, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament.

Let us take down the great volumes of secular history. Can you show me a man, was raised up among men, who hardened himself against God and prospered? No! secular history records the fact that the mills of God grind slow but they grind exceedingly small.

I could list men like Napoleon, the Czars of Russia, the Caesars of Rome, the Hitlers and the Mussolinis of this world. We can see Franco and the last remnant of Fascism and Hitlerism in Europe, but he too will topple into the grave, and answer for the times he shut up God's people and tortured the believers, and denied civil and religious liberty in that priest-ridden country of Spain.

I tell you, you cannot harden your neck against God and prosper.

You cannot do it. Young man you intend to go out in sin. I want to warn you tonight, you cannot harden yourself against God and prosper. Young woman, you intend to reject Christ tonight, and go down the stairs of this Town Hall, a Christ rejecter. I want to warn you, you cannot harden yourself against God and prosper. It cannot be done.

This is a law which is unalterable. This is a great indisputable fact. It towers over all history, sacred or secular, pure or profane, the fact that you cannot harden your neck against God and prosper.

TRAGEDY

In this verse there is also *tragedy*, "shall suddenly be destroyed."

I come with this terrible and awful confirmation in my heart that this text is peculiarly applicable to some person in this Town Hall. It is going to be sudden destruction for you.

I held a tent campaign some years ago in the village of Dundonald. Mr. Wylie, he had a business then in Dundonald before he entered the ministry, invited me

to have that mission. We erected a tent and started to preach, and God started to move. One Wednesday night, (I will never forget this) two women came to that tent mission. They heard the Word of God. They were strangely moved, but they both rejected Christ. They went along the Comber Road, Christ-rejecters. On Friday night one of those women came back to the mission. I made an appeal. She raised her hand. When I called people to come forward, she came forward and I pointed her to Christ.

She sat for a long time in tears, and then she said, "I am glad I am saved." She continued, "I want to tell you the circumstances. On Wednesday night I was here. I had a woman with me." I said, "That is right. I recognised you. I remember you sitting in the tent." She said, "We left, and we both should have been saved. We could hardly get along the Comber Road. My friend said to me, 'Look, I cannot go tomorrow night. We will both go back on Friday night.' Mr. Paisley, my friend was sitting by the fireside yesterday and she gave a little gasp, and when her loved ones ran to her, she was in eternity. She never got here. Oh, Mr. Paisley, we intended both of us to get saved tonight. But my friend is gone and gone forever."

Do not play with your soul. God is a God of knowledge, and He will by no means spare the guilty.

I could repeat instance after instance, over and over again, in my ministry, where God suddenly destroyed men and women. They never got back to the meetings. They never had another opportunity.

Look, there are some persons in this meeting and this text is for them. If they do not repent tonight and turn

to God, they are going to be suddenly destroyed. That is why God gave me this text.

You say, "Preacher, that is a solemn thing to say." I must deliver God's message! I did not want to preach on this text tonight. I did not want to say the things I had to say tonight. It gives no pleasure to my heart to say them, but I must say them. They are for you.

You have been often reprov'd, you have hardened your neck. I tell you, God says, "you shall suddenly be destroyed."

You know, the only minute that you can be sure of is this minute. You cannot be sure of another. "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, thou knowest not what a day brings forth." The only moment I am sure of is this moment. Friend, this moment purpose in your heart to turn to Christ and be saved. Come on, make a holy resolve now in your soul. Now or never. "Well, praise God, it is going to be now preacher. I am going to come."

FINALITY

I wish I could close the Book there. But the text says, (it strikes a note of finality), "destroyed without remedy." What words are these, "without remedy."

Dr. Morrison, the founder of the Evangelical Union Movement in Scotland, was a great Greek scholar. It is said that he decided to study carefully his Greek Testament, to see if there was not even one ray of light beyond the grave for a Christ-rejecting soul, if there was not even a glimmer of hope for a man who died without Christ. The great scholar studied all the Greek words

that had to do with the everlasting punishment, the doom and judgment of the damned.

One day, it is recorded, Dr. Morrison got up and closed his Greek Testament, and said, "There is no hope for a soul who dies without Christ."

There is no hope for a soul who dies without Christ! "Destroyed without remedy."

You can never climb out of the furnace of hell. You can never hammer down the door which shuts you into the everlasting flames. You can never break the bars of the eternal prison house of the damned.

It is, "without remedy."

Lost, without remedy. Tormented, without remedy. Ruined without remedy. Damned without remedy. "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still. He that is unclean, let him be unclean still." As the tree falleth, so shall it lie.

"He" — Individuality. "Often reprov'd" — Opportunity. "Hardeneth his neck" — Iniquity. "Shall suddenly be destroyed" — Tragedy. "And that without remedy" — Finality.

Do not let it happen to you!

AMEN AND AMEN.

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